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AUTHOR	Posante-Loro, Rebecca; And Others
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ABSTRACT

The overall purpose of the national Head Start evaluation is to assess the impact, on the children and parents being served, of: (1) the educational services component of Head Start, and (2) a new demonstration program within Head Start, Basic Educational Skills (BES). The evaluation deals with a total of 65 Head Start programs and their families. This report discusses the issues and logistics involved in the evaluation activities which took place during the period from October 1978 through December 1979. Head Start and BES sites were selected, 46 week-long site visits were made, children were selected to serve in control groups, and children in Head Start or BES programs and control group children were tested. (BW)

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NATIONAL EVALUATION OF HEAD START EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND BASIC EDUCATIONAL SKILLS INITIATIVE

D R A F T

Project Report 9: Procedures in the Implementation of the Study Design, 1978-79

D R A F T

November 1, 1980

Contract No. HEW-105-78-1306

Authors:
Rebecca Posante-Loro
Judy McNeil
Jacelyn Wedell-Monnig

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Project Director: Judy McNeil

NTS Research Corporation
2634 Chapel Hill Boulevard
Durham, NC 27707

Prepared for:
The Administration for Children, Youth and Families
Office of Human Development
Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, D.C.

Project Officer: Dennis Deloria

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Basic Educational Skills Head Start Programs

Seattle, Washington
Knoxvile, Tennessee
Topeka, Kansas
Spokane, Washington
Naples, Florida
Gary, Indiana
Easton, Pennsylvania
Albany, New York
Red Lake, Minnesota
East Boston, Massachusetts
Leominsister, Massachusetts
Russelville, Arkansas
Amarillo, Texas
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Pleasant Hill, California
Huntington, West Virginia
Riverside, California

Head Start Programs

Goldsboro, North Carolina
Sumter, South Carolina
Asheville, North Carolina
New Bern, North Carolina
Edenton, North Carolina
York, Alabama
Maywood, Illinois
Norfolk, Virginia
Greeley, Colorado
Elmsford, New York
Saginaw, Michigan
Seattle, Washington
Redwood, California
Chicago, Illinois
Chandler, Oklahoma
Detroit, Michigan
Columbus, Ohio
Baltimore, Maryland
Denmark, South Carolina
Uniontown, Pennsylvania
Price, Utah
Austin, Texas
Lafayette, Louisiana
Jackson, Mississippi
Terrell, Texas
Oceana, West Virginia
Greensburg, Pennsylvania
Los Angeles, California

NATIONAL EVALUATION OF HEAD START EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND BASIC EDUCATIONAL SKILLS INITIATIVE

PROJECT STAFF
Phases 1 and 2

NTS Research Corporation

Project Director:	Judy McNeil	
Deputy Project Directors:	Richard Rohlf Jacelyn Wedell-Monnig	
Principal Investigators:	A. Jackson Stenner Daniel Ferritor	
Directors of Training:	H. Judith Platt C. Wainwright Mengel	
Directors of Field Operations:	Virginia Griffin Rebecca Posante-Loro	
Regional Field Supervisors:	Kim Watterson Amy Yoffie Dorothy Carnegie	Evelyn Pinkney Susan Rosenthal Barbara Tannen
Field Supervisors:	Heidi Chapman Kathy M. Graham Jill Grossholz Pamela E. Jaskot Kerida A. Merritt	Lisa Simmons Martha J. Szegda Herman L. Turner Lindy S. Wagner Pauline Zobel
Supervisor of Data Management:	Ruth R. Ashe	
Computer Applications:	Michael McAnulty David Birnbaum Richard Merritt	Joe Howell Eloise Curry
Project Assistants:	Jackie Baggett Michael Lesh Janet Zelman	
Project Secretaries:	Linda Bailey Judy Crotts	Dianne Bennett Lenora Ellis
Major Consultants:	Ross Conner, Assistant Professor University of California at Irvine	
	Richard Freemen Focus on Children	
	Robert Boruch, Director Methodology and Evaluation Research Northwestern Universtiy	
	Steven Fosberg Abt Associates, Inc.	

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This report is one of ten submitted by NTS Research Corporation to the Administration for Children, Youth and Families under Contract No. HEW-105-78-1306.

Project Report 1: Design and Sampling

Project Report 2: Panel Recommendations

Project Report 3: Child Outcomes: Individual Testing Battery for the Fall 1979 Cohort

Project Report 4: National Evaluation of Head Start Educational Services and Basic Educational Skills Initiative: Individual Testing Battery for Fall 1979

Project Report 5: OMB Submission Package

Project Report 6: Description and Analysis of Program Data: Basic Educational Skills Initiative, 1979

Project Report 7: Description of Program Data: Head Start Sample Programs, 1979

Project Report 8: Generalizability Studies of the Child Test Battery and of the Alternative Classroom Environment Scales

Project Report 9: Procedures in the Implementation of the Study Design, 1978-79

Project Report 10: Phase II Summary Report: Fall 1979 Child Data Collection

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW

Introduction to the Evaluation

Each year Head Start programs serve approximately 385,000 children and families, at a cost of over $700 million dollars--the largest annual federal expenditure for the education of preschool children. NTS Research Corporation is currently conducting the beginning phases of the largest and potentially most long term evaluation of Head Start programs yet planned. The overall purpose of this evaluation is to assess the impact, on the children and parents being served, of: (1) the educational services component of Head Start programs nationwide, and (2) a new demonstration program within Head Start, Basic Educational Skills. The evaluation deals with a total of 65 Head Start programs and their families, potentially for 10 to 12 years.

Head Start is a nationwide program for preschool children of low-income families and is supported by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Since its inception in 1965, the goal of Head Start has been to improve each child's ability to deal both with the present environment in which he/she lives and with later responsibilities in school and life. Head Start provides services not only in the educational area, but also in the areas of health, nutrition, parent involvement, and social services. While this is an evaluation of the educational component, the study also gathers information on Head Start's other components.

The Basic Educational Skills Program is the newest experimental project initiated by Head Start. As stated in the BES Program Guidelines:[1]

> The purpose of the project is to demonstrate and test effective educational strategies that help young children acquire developmentally appropriate educational skills in a climate that supports physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development. The project links Head Start programs and public schools, together with parents, in a collaborative effort to facilitate the child's learning experiences. The overall objective is to enhance school readiness, later school achievement, and to promote attitudes conducive to life long learning. The specific aim is to try out a variety of educational approaches to increase the child's basic educational skills, with emphasis on learning outcomes in oral language, reading, writing, mathematics, science, problem-solving, and learning attitudes. (Learning attitudes include self-esteem as a learner, motivation, curiosity, initiative, purposefulness, persistence, task completion, and interest in life-long learning.) [p.1]
>
> The goals of this project are to examine the effectiveness of a variety of approaches to implementing the four program elements: Curriculum, Parent Involvement, Teacher Attitudes and Behaviors, and Continuity. These program elements have been highlighted by reviews of research and educational practice as among the principal variables that affect children's educational achievement. The principal purpose of the BES field experiment is to determine the contribution of variables associated with the four elements to children's acquisition of basic educational skills. [p.5]

Individual Head Start programs are operated by local grantees which are community action organizations, public school systems, tribal councils, and other non-profit agencies. Decisions about such issues as staff, curriculum, facilities, and recruitment procedures are made by a local policy council composed of parents and other members of the community. With this kind of local initiative, Head Start programs vary widely from one location to another in the ways in which they deliver services--within the guidelines of performance standards set by the Federal agency which funds and administers the program, the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF). The national office of

[1] Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, Basic Educational Skills Project: A Head Start Research and Demonstration Initiative in Collaboration With the Elementary Schools; Guidelines for Local Head Start Programs and Elementary Schools, March, 1979.

ACYF also periodically funds special demonstration programs (such as BES) for the purpose of initiating, testing, and disseminating innovative program ideas.

The regional offices of ACYF are responsible for monitoring local program service delivery to ensure that each program meets the required performance standards. Evaluations of Head Start program outcomes are initiated by the national office of ACYF. The evaluations are diverse and include three distinct kinds:

- Evaluations of the basic national Head Start program, which use representative national samples of about 30 of the total 1800 programs, and examine the areas of Health Services, Educational Services, Social Services, Parent Involvement, Services to Handicapped Children, Services to Migrant Children, and Staff Training.

- Evaluations of the Head Start demonstration programs, each of which involve about a dozen sites nationally, including, for example, Project Developmental Continuity, the Child and Family Resource Program, Home Start Training Centers, the Bilingual/Bicultural Curriculum Project, and the BES Project.

- Projects to develop evaluation measures and methods, for example, the project to translate the ETS CIRCUS preschool test battery into Spanish, and the project to develop a comprehensive set of measures of program effects on preschool children.

This evaluation represents both the first and second categories above: it is a nationwide evaluation of the Educational Services of the Basic Head Start Program and the evaluation of the newest Head Start demonstration project, Basic Educational Skills.

ACFY has actively gathered information over the past fifteen years regarding both program delivery and program effects. A unique aspect of the evaluation described in this report is its focus on the relationship between program delivery and program effects on a national scale.

As of January 1980, NTS had selected Head Start programs for the evaluation, enlisted the cooperation of both BES and non-BES programs, developed instruments to measure variables of importance to the study, pilot tested and revised the instruments, collected process data in the evaluation programs, initiated sample selection and random assignment procedures, and pretested the first cohort of children in the evaluation.

Introduction to the Report

This report, Procedures in the Implementation of the Study Design, 1978-79 discusses the issues and logistics involved in the above activities which took place during the period from October 1978 through December 1979. An overview of the evaluation design is presented below followed by a description of the report's contents.

Summary of the evaluation design. This evaluation is a longitudinal study that will follow children and their parents from preschool through the fourth grade. The study focuses on the preschool and elementary experiences of three groups of children and their parents:

- Those who participate in typical Head Start programs--the Head Start Study Group
- Those who are eligible for Head Start but who are not enrolled--the Alternative Services (Control) Group
- Those who participate in the Basic Educational Skills demonstration program--the BES Group

The major evaluation questions to be answered in this study are as follows:

1. What different types of approaches do Head Start programs use to deliver educational services? How do these approaches differ in BES programs? How do these approaches differ from programs in alternative service settings?
2. How do different program approaches, and ways children and parents partake of the programs, affect the benefits achieved by children and parents?

3. Do children and parents in BES programs benefit more than children and parents in non-BES Head Start programs? Do children and parents in both BES and non-BES Head Start programs benefit more than children and parents in alternative service settings?

The dominant issues contained in this set of questions is a focus on the relationships between program delivery and program effects on a national scale.

NTS's conceptualization of the evaluation includes four basic groups of variables: the determinants of how the program is implemented; the program process variables; the degree to which the children and parents are exposed to the process; and the outcomes of the process.[1] The study was designed to collect data on these variables throughout the program year for three cohorts of children. Program-level data is to be gathered mid-year; outcome information is to be gathered as pre-scores in the fall and as post-scores in the spring. During the first year of the evaluation, program process information was collected mid-year in the 1978-79 program year. At the start of the second year, fall 1979, child pre-scores for approximately 1,200 children were obtained on a battery of child tests. This report is a description of the procedures which were used to collect both these groups of data.

The instruments which have been used thus far in the study are the:

Program Description Interview

Center Description Interview

Teacher Interview

ACES Classroom Observation System

Child Test Battery

[1]For a more complete discussion of the design, see Project Report 7 and/or NTS' technical proposal for the evaluation.

In the following chapters, we will present NTS's approach to the data collection which has taken place over the past fifteen months. The report is organized as a chronological presentation of those activities which took place between the fall of 1978 and mid-December of 1979. It includes the preparation for and the procedures used during the site visits for the collection of process data in the Spring of 1979; a description of the hiring and training of a network of local data collectors; and the preparation for and administration of child tests in 29 Head Start and 13 BES programs.

Similar procedures have been used in the BES and Head Start sites to collect all data. However, there were major differences in the preparatory stages. Since the BES sites agreed to participate in the evaluation by accepting BES funding, they knew all along that they would be involved in an evaluation. In contrast, the Head Start sites were unaware of the evaluation until after they had been selected. NTS's approach to securing the Head Start programs' cooperation, then, was quite different from that used with the BES programs. In addition, in the BES sites many fewer children were to be tested and the method for selecting them did not involve random assignment as in the Head Start sites. Therefore, there was a major difference in the preparation for child testing and to an extent, in the methods for conducting the child tests.

This report is organized such that where the logistics for Head Start and BES differ, they will be presented separately. Where they are similar, there will be no separation of the two evaluations.

CHAPTER TWO

SECURING THE COOPERATION OF THE PROGRAMS IN THE EVALUATION

The Basic Educational Skills programs agreed to participation in the evaluation from the onset, at the time they applied for their BES grants. However, another group of programs in the evaluation was composed of Head Start programs which were receiving no demonstration program monies over and above their basic Head Start grants. These programs were randomly chosen early in the contract. None of the members of this latter group knew of the evaluation prior to their selection and notification. NTS therefore had a major task in securing the cooperation of these randomly selected Head Start progams. The major focus of this chapter is on the work that NTS and ACYF staff performed during December 1978 through February 1979 to secure the cooperation of the 30 selected Head Start programs.

Head Start Programs

Of the 1800 Head Start programs nationwide, 30 programs were randomly selected to participate in this evaluation. Programs were chosen to be representative of the various sections of the country, sizes of Head Start programs and locations in rural, small town and urban areas. The selected sample was approved by the ACYF national office staff as were all correspondence and procedures for securing the programs' cooperation.

Procedures. The steps which NTS followed in preparation for site visits to the Head Start programs were:

1. Contact Regional ACYF offices to inform them of programs selected within their regions.

2. Secure Regional ACYF approval of programs which were selected.

3. Determine the Regional office choice of methods for initially contacting programs within their regions (either directly from NTS or through the region).

4. Contact the programs (Grantees and delegate agencies) via letter to inform them of their selection into the study.

5. Follow-up phone contacts with the progams to describe the study and answer questions.

NTS was aware from the beginning that careful preparation for the conduct of the evaluation in the sites was important, particularly as concerned securing the cooperation of the randomly selected Head Start programs. Although the programs, once selected, were expected by ACYF to participate, NTS was well aware that creating a positive attitude toward this participation would facilitate all later contacts. Therefore a specific and careful procedure for contacting the sites was developed and implemented.

There were several factors which led to the formulation of the procedures. Some of them were of a practical nature and others were for reasons of protocol. First, it was important that regional ACYF officials be notified of all contacts with programs within their regions because the regional officials are those most directly responsible for the local program Grantees. It is the regional ACYF officials to whom programs turn for advice regarding program operations and requirements. Secondly, if programs had questions about the study and called the regions, we wanted to ensure that the regional offices had correct and up-to-date information. Third, a careful orientation of the programs to the evaluation was necessary for a clear and accurate understanding of the evaluation; participation meant certain responsibilities and impositions for the sites. We were very aware that misunderstandings about the study, the sponsorship of it, or the requirements of it would lead undoubtedly to a multitude of problems in future phases. From the first contact we attempted to provide clear and factual information about the evaluation.

Initial Regional Contact. Initial contacts were made with regional ACYF staff. NTS developed and revised an introductory letter which would be sent to the regional staff from the ACYF project office in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the letter was to familiarize the regions with both NTS and the study. The letter stressed that since prior Head Start studies had found the program to be successful, the purpose of the current study was to identify and document the specific ways in which Head Start benefits children and families. The use of random assignment in the study was mentioned in the letter. Finally, a two-page description of the study was included in the packet. (See Appendix A, Letter 1.) This letter was mailed to all Regional ACYF offices.

Following the letter from ACYF, NTS sent a similar letter to all Regions introducing themselves and the study. This letter was followed by a phone call from the NTS Project Director to the person within each region who had been designated to deal with the study. The phone call was to confirm receipt of the letter, to obtain the regions' initial reactions to the evaluation and to discuss plans for the study in each region. At this point, the sites selected in each region were cleared with the regional office. Two programs were eliminated from the sample because the regional officials knew of serious funding difficulties and a potential change of grantee in the near future. Once replacements for these two programs had been drawn and cleared, a letter was sent from NTS to the ACYF regional representatives confirming the specific sites in each region which had been selected. In addition a sample letter was included for regional personnel to use (if they chose) to notify programs regarding their selection. (All letters referred to here are contained in Appendix A.) Regional representatives were asked to notify sites of their selection, and NTS confirmed the site contacts by calling the regions approximately one week later. Some

regional personnel were anxious to notify the sites in their region while others preferred that NTS make all contacts.

Initial Program Contacts. Once regional officials had cleared the sites in their regions, NTS made direct contact with the programs. Letters and summaries of the study were sent by NTS to both Head Start and BES programs. (See Appendix A, Letters 3 and 4.) These letters briefly introduced the study. They also indicated that an NTS staff member would be calling to provide more details and to answer questions.

A phone contact form had been developed which guided the calls which were then placed to all of the sites. This contact form (See Telephone Contact Form, Appendix A) assured that the NTS caller provided the programs with an explanation of the study and in addition ensured that the programs and NTS worked out a scheduled time for the site visits.

BES Programs

The seventeen BES programs funded in 1978 knew of the evaluation and their required participation in it from the time of their application for and receipt of their special demonstration grants. It was NTS's responsibility to inform these programs further about the evaluation plans. The staff of the BES programs knew that BES was to be evaluated; our desire was to generate a positive attitude toward the evaluation among the BES programs. In a sense, their cooperation was being enlisted, as was the cooperation of the randomly-selected programs.

Conferences. NTS staff attended three national conferences for BES programs during the 1978-79 program year. At these conferences (in October, 1978, and January and February, 1979), the NTS Project Director made presentations about the evaluation and held question and answer sessions. The other staff

members who were present made sure that they met and talked with at least one staff member from each BES program. In addition, NTS staff attended a number of small group sessions between ACYF and one or two BES programs. Phone contact between these NTS staff and the BES programs was established immediately after the October conference and has continued throughout the project. As a consequence of the personal acquaintances that were made at the early conferences, many of the BES programs were visited by an NTS staff member with whom they were already familiar and BES staff members appeared comfortable in calling NTS for information.

Summary

NTS approached the Head Start sites to introduce the study in a very prescribed manner. The purpose of this introduction was to prepare the sites for their participation in the study and to make them aware of ACYF's sponsorship of the evaluation. Although the study was explained in some detail through letters and calls, the bulk of the explanation was planned for the site visits which were to follow soon after. Initial response to the letter and phone contacts was very positive. In only one case did a program appear to have reservations about the study, and for this program special arrangements were made for a member of the ACYF regional office staff to be present during part of the NTS site visit.

CHAPTER THREE

SITE VISITS

The major purpose of a staff visit to each program was to explain the study and enlist the cooperation and goodwill of the programs. NTS had initially planned to make visits to each of the programs of two to three days in length. After beginning the study, however, it became clear that the information which ACYF wished to gather about the programs would necessitate a longer visit to each. NTS therefore planned to make five-day site visits to each program. The numerous activities expected of the site visitors can be grouped basically into information-giving and information-receiving activities. After the letter and phone contacts with all 47 programs had been completed and tentative site visit dates had been arranged with the programs, the schedules were settled and confirmed. NTS staff members called each program and confirmed the dates of the visits and the schedule for most of the activities within the visits.

The 47 week-long visits, which were to take place within a 10 week period, were considered crucial to the development of positive relationships with all 47 programs (Head Start and BES). To assure a clear presentation of the study and accurate data collection, a well-informed site visitor, carefully trained in every aspect of the study was a necessity.

The Site Visitors

Eight senior and four junior professionals from NTS performed the site visits in spring of 1979. Table 3.1 provides a breakdown of the background characteristics of the site visiting staff. As can be seen in Table 3.1, the

Table 3.1

Characteristics of Site Visitors

Site Visitor Name	Sex	Ethnicity	Level of Education	Languages other than English
1. Terri Alkire	F	W	B.A.	-
2. Robert J. Bentley	M	B	Ph.D.	-
3. Robert Burton	M	W	Ph.D.	-
4. Dorothy Carnegie	F	B	M.A.	-
5. Rebecca Posante-Loro	F	W	Ph.D.	-
6. Richard Rohlf	M	W	Ph.D.	-
7. Susan Rosenthal	F	W	Ph.D.	-
8. Barbara Tannen	F	W	B.A.	-
9. Joseph Thomas	M	B	M.A.[Ph.D](ABD)	Spanish (Nigerian, French)
10. Herman Turner	M	B	B.A.	-
11. Kim Watterson	F	W	B.A.	Spanish
12. Jacelyn Wedell-Monnig	F	W	Ph.D.	-
Totals: Site Visitors = 12	F=7 M=5	B=4 W=8	BA=4 MA=2 PhD=6	Spanish=2 Other=2

Key:
M = Male
F = Female
B = Black
W = White
BA = Bachelor of Arts Degree
MA = Master of Arts Degree
PhD = Doctor of Philosophy Degree

staff was composed of a broad range of qualified professionals. All 12 persons were selected or hired especially for these visits because they had the experience and social skills to enter a program, gain the confidence and respect of the local staff, explain the study and collect the necessary data. Two persons were hired who were, in addition, bilingual in Spanish and English and could, therefore, communicate with the staff and parents in the Hispanic bilingual sites.

Training for Site Visits

Purpose. In order that positive relationships could be built with the sites, it was extremely important that the initial visits to the sites be positive and convey the intents and procedures of the study. Thus, the primary purpose of the site visitor training was to train NTS staff in the study objectives, design complexities and data collection procedures so that they could share this information with the programs. In addition, the site visitors needed to learn to collect information from the programs. Specifically, the training covered such areas as the evaluation plan, Head Start organization and protocol, basic site visit procedures, and administration of the interviews and observation instruments. The amount and complexity of the information to be disseminated to and gathered from Head Start and BES sites was substantial. Therefore, an intense and well-organized training effort was required. (See Appendix D, Site Visitor Training Agenda.)

Training was developed around the concept of modules. The modules reflected the two roles of the visitor: information provider and information recipient. That is, the site visitors were to explain the study (an extension of securing cooperation) and also administer the data collection instruments. A third module dealt with NTS administrative procedures.

Providing information. The site development portion of the training included sessions designed to assist the visitors in learning about the local programs, providing information, and generally establishing positive relationships with the evaluation programs. This portion of training familiarized the trainees with the study, sensitized them to some of the issues that might arise on site, and suggested how to handle those issues.

Prior to the visit, a full schedule of meetings and activities was planned with the program staff for the site visit week. The training in information-giving focused primarily on two areas: the role and image of the site visitor while representing NTS and the study and the specific situations in which the site visitor would likely find him or herself.

The first part of training defined the role of the site visitor. It included the background and purpose of the study, indicating the site visitor role in both. The site visitors learned how to use an NTS-developed slide/tape presentation designed to inform participating sites about the nature and scope of the evaluation. Training helped them realize that the impression they left with the Head Start staff could greatly affect the study.

The remaining sections of training dealt specifically with the content to be covered during the site visits. The site visitor would be scheduling meetings with the Head Start and BES Director, the Parent Policy Committee, the Grantee and/or Delegate Agency, and public school personnel. Training addressed the anticipated information needs of each of these groups.

Random assignment. An important area that was covered was the presentation to the site of ACYF's design for the study, particularly random assignment of children to the Head Start and Alternative Services (control) groups within the non-BES Head Start programs. In addition the site visitors needed to explain NTS's plans for implementing random assignment. Several hours during training were spent discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology and various ethical and legal issues regarding random assignment.

One of the unique features of this evaluation is the random assignment of children eligible for Head Start into Head Start and control groups. The purpose of using randomization is to ensure that the children who are in the Head Start group and the children who are in the Alternative Services Group (non-Head Start) are as similar as possible at the outset. In this way, the different experiences that influence preschool-aged children can be reliably measured, and observed differences in outcomes can be attributed to the preschool experiences rather than to certain background differences.

Several training sessions focused solely on the topic of randomization. As this is a pivotal concept in the study, it was essential that the site visitors be able to explain the procedure accurately and answer the questions of program personnel. It should also be pointed out that, in fact, the site visitors were the first people who would tell the programs the specifics of the randomization portion of the design. Because the selection of children and families for Head Start has always been considered a prerogative of the program staff and parent policy council (operating within guidelines), it was expected that some of the programs might be less than enthusiastic in their endorsement of the procedure.

An introduction to the topic was part of the slide presentation, and using the Guide to Randomization, the site visitor discussed the concept and recorded the responses of program personnel (See Guide to Randomization, Appendix E). Given the variety of sites (size, location, etc.) and the absence of an ACYF mandate or strong recommendation to the programs concerning random assignment, it was evident from the inception of the study that the randomization would have to be tailored to best fit the individual situations of each Head Start site and that the persuasiveness of the NTS staff would be crucial.

Receiving information. More than 16 hours of training were devoted to training on using the instruments for data collection. As described in Volume 1, both observation and interview instruments were used during the site visits.

The training on the observation system (ACES) consisted of a discussion of the parts of the instrument, clarification of definitional issues, and the viewing of a number of videotaped activities in a Head Start classroom. The trainees scored segments of practice tapes, discussed and resolved definitional and observational issues and then were shown a longer tape which they scored and again discussed. (See Appendix C, Alternative Classroom Environment Scales.)

The remaining portion of instrument training covered the use of the interview outlines: the Program Description Interview (PDI), the Center Description Interview (CDI), and the Teacher Interview (TI). For each of these instruments, the interview was first reviewed on a question-by-question basis to clarify and define terms. The trainers role-played one full administration of each interview. The trainees were then divided into pairs for role-playing the interview themselves. In each case, one person acted as the interviewer and one as the interviewee. Upon completion of the interview, the roles were reversed. The group then reconvened to discuss issues and questions. (See Appendix B, Interview Instruments.)

Administration. The remainder of the training conference was spent on administrative matters including distribution of materials, reporting procedures, financial matters, and data receipt.

BES and Head Start. In most ways the activities of the site visitors at the BES and at the Head Start sites were the same. Nearly identical information was collected and meetings were held with the same groups of program people. However, the BES programs had agreed to participate in the evaluation as part of their BES grant, while Head Start programs were randomly selected for the study. In addition, before the site visits the BES programs had attended two national conferences at which NTS evaluation presentations had been made. Thus the

non-BES Head Start programs were likely to have more serious questions and objections, and would need more time to digest the information.

The site visitors were trained on the differences in the two types of programs in the evaluation so as to make the necessary distinctions for the programs. This was particularly important as the same version of the slide/tape presentation was used at each site, and it was the responsibility of the site visitor to tailor the information to the BES and non-BES Head Start programs.

As mentioned earlier, NTS felt that the initial site visits were critically important to the effective implementation of the study design. Much of the success of the first year of the evaluation was seen as dependent upon the accomplishment of the site visit objectives. The first and perhaps most important objective was to establish a good cooperative working relationship between NTS and the Head Start and BES programs. The secondary objectives were to pilot test the instruments, further refine the interviews and the classroom observation system, and obtain baseline information from each program for a better understanding of the study sample diversity. An additional important objective was to hire a local Study Coordinator in the Head Start sites to assume liaison and data collection responsibilities.

Site Visit Scheduling

The actual scheduling of visits was a major task with 47 sites to be visited by 12 people within 10 weeks. In planning the visits the following guidelines were observed:

1. Mix of BES and Head Start programs for all site visitors.
2. Match of ethnicity of site visitors to programs.
3. Bilingual (English-Spanish) site visitors to Spanish-speaking sites when possible.
4. No more than two weeks out at a time for any site visitor.
5. Circuit trips of 2 or more sites where possible to cut costs.

In addition, scheduling was designed so that during the first two weeks all staff visited at least one program, and following this first round of visits, all site visitors returned to NTS for debriefing. Visits occurred between March 12 and May 17.

Once a tentative schedule was developed, with two alternate dates for each program, the programs were notified of the suggested visit dates. In most cases, NTS's first choice was convenient for the program staff. However, in some cases, the program's schedule, particularly Easter vacations, conflicted with the initial date and an alternate week was selected. After the dates were finalized, NTS staff were assigned to particular sites using the guidelines listed above. The NTS site visitor for each program then called the Head Start Director or BES Coordinator to confirm arrival times and arrange a tentative schedule for the week's activities.

The majority of the trips were made according to the planned schedule. In cases where trips had to be changed, the cause was either illness of the site visitor or a natural calamity at the program location (for example, a flood and a tornado forced rescheduling for two programs). In all cases, visits were able to be rescheduled for another week during the site visiting period. Only one of the 47 sites was not visited; the cancelled visit was due to internal program difficulties reported to NTS by the Region IV ACYF office. Approximately one week before the scheduled visit the regional office requested that the program be dropped from the evaluation.

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show the site visitor and visit dates for each of the Head Start and BES programs.

Overview of the Site Visit

Visits began the week following training to ensure eager, freshly trained site visitors. During the five-day visits, site visitors met with program

Figure 3.1

Schedule of NTS Site Visits to Head Start (Non-BES) Programs
1979

Program Location	Site Visitor	Site Visit Dates
Goldsboro, North Carolina	Terri Alkire	March 19-23
Sumter, South Carolina	Bob Bentley	March 19-23
Asheville, North Carolina	Susan Rosenthal	March 19-23
New Bern, North Carolina	Joseph Thomas	March 19-23
Edenton, North Carolina	Herman Turner	March 19-23
Los Angeles, California	Kim Watterson	March 19-23
California	Joseph Thomas	April 2-6
Maywood, Illinois	Herman Turner	April 2-6
Norfolk, Virginia	Kim Watterson	April 2-6
Greeley, Colorado	Terri Alkire	April 9-13
Elmsford, New York	Barbara Tannen	April 9-13
Saginaw, Michigan	Herman Turner	April 9-13
Seattle, Washington	Jacelyn Wedell-Monnig	April 9-13
Redwood, California	Bob Burton	April 16-20
Chicago, Illinois	Bob Bentley	April 16-20
Chandler, Oklahoma	Dick Rohlf	April 16-20
Detroit, Michigan	Terri Alkire	April 23-27
Columbus, Ohio	Dorothy Carnegie	April 23-27
Baltimore, Maryland	Susan Rosenthal	April 23-27
Denmark, South Carolina	Joseph Thomas	April 23-27
Uniontown, Pennsylvania	Herman Turner	April 23-27
Price, Utah	Terri Alkire	April 30-May 4
Austin, Texas	Becky Posante	April 30-May 4
Lafayette, Louisiana	Barbara Tannen	April 30-May 4
Jackson, Mississippi	Joseph Thomas	April 30-May 4
Terrell, Texas	Dorothy Carnegie	May 7-12
Oceana, West Virginia	Dick Rohlf	May 7-12
Greensburg, Pennsylvania	Herman Turner	May 7-11
York, Alabama	Kim Watterson	May 7-12

Figure 3.2

Schedule of NTS Site Visits to Basic Educational Skills Programs
1979

Program Location	Site Visitor	Site Visit Dates
Seattle, Washington	Becky Posante	March 11-16
Knoxville, Tennessee	Barbara Tannen	March 11-16
Albuquerque, New Mexico	Kim Watterson	March 11-16
Topeka, Kansas	Bob Burton	March 19-23
Spokane, Washington	Becky Posante	March 19-23
Naples, Florida	Dick Rohlf	March 19-23
Pleasant Hill, California	Susan Rosenthal	April 2-6
Gary, Indiana	Joseph Thomas	April 9-12
Huntington, West Virginia	Dorothy Carnegie	April 16-20
Riverside, California	Kim Watterson	April 16-20
Russelville, Arkansas	Dick Rohlf	April 23-27
Amarillo, Texas	Kim Watterson	April 23-28
Easton, Pennsylvania	Herman Turner	April 30-May 4
Albany, New York	Bob Bentley	May 7-12
Leominister, Massachusettes	Barbara Tannen	May 7-12
Red Lake, Minnesota	Terri Alkire	May 14-18
East Boston, Massachusettes	Becky Posante	May 14-18

administrators, coordinators, teachers, parents and public school officials. They also collected information regarding program operations, observed two classrooms and interviewed the teachers of the observed classrooms.

As discussed earlier, site visitors were trained to provide detailed explanations of the purposes of the evaluation and of the evaluation design. It was important to the development of site relations to carefully document concerns voiced both by program staff and Policy Council members in order for NTS and ACYF to be responsive to those concerns. Whenever possible, issues and questions were resolved on site; other issues were brought back to NTS for discussion and resolution.

During the week, site visitors met with a number of individuals associated with the Head Start programs. Figure 3.3 outlines the types of meetings which were conducted, the purpose of each meeting and the participants. Figure 3.4 shows a typical schedule of activities for a week's site visit to a Head Start site. The four-day visits to the BES sites were similar with one exception. Since local Study Coordinators were not hired in BES sites, the day spent interviewing Study Coordinators (Wednesday, in the attached sample) was not necessary.

Major Site Visit Activities

Following is a brief description of the major activities of the site visitor during the week-long visit. While site visitor experiences differed somewhat from site to site, these core activities remained relatively invariant across all sites.

Explaining the evaluation. Initial meetings were held with Grantee and Delegate Agency Directors and Head Start Program Directors. This time was spent acquainting them with NTS, explaining the study, answering questions and

Figure 3.3

Site Visit Meetings

People	Kind of Meeting	Purpose	
Program Director	individual	provide information administer PDI	(may be in 1 or 2 meetings)
BES Coordinator*	individual	provide information	
One Center Director	individual	administer CDI	
Program/Center Staff	group	provide information	
Grantee Staff	individual and/or group	provide information	
Delegate Staff	individual and/or group	provide information	
Teacher I	individual	administer TI	
Teacher II	individual	administer TI	
Parents	group (Parent Policy Council) and/or individual	provide information	
Public School Personnel**	individual and/or group	provide information	

*BES sites only
**Site visitors were most likely to meet with public school personnel in BES sites; this may or may not have occurred in regular Head Start sites.

Figure 3.4

Sample Schedule For A Site Visit (Spring 1979)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Presentation of Evaluation/Answer Questions	Data Collection	Presentation of Evaluation Data Collection	Data Collection	Wrap-up for the Week
Individual meeting with: Program Director	Observe in one Head Start classroom from time children arrive until they leave.	Obtain a copy of the PIR transfer into PDI	Observe in one Head Start classroom from time children arrive until they leave.	Meet with BES Coordinator and staff to discuss the week.
Center Director (Where appropriate)		Interview BES Coordinator and/or Program Director 30 minutes - 1 hour		
BES Coordinator		Interview Center Director or person appropriate to respond, 30 minutes - 1 hour		*Train local data collectors to contact and interview parents*
Grantee/Delegate Agency staff				
Elementary School Personnel	Interview teacher 45 minutes - 1 hour	Meet with staff members individually, if they desire, such as: education coordinator, parent involvement coordinator.	Interview teacher 45 min - 1 hour.	
Group Staff Meeting if desired.	Interview BES staff of elementary school(s), 1 hour		*Interview applicant for local data collectors and coordinators*	
Arrange meetings with anyone else the site would like informed of the evaluation.	*Interview applicants for local data collectors and coordinators*	Meet with parent group, if possible.		

familiarizing them with the tasks we wanted to accomplish during the five-day visit. A slide/tape presentation, developed by NTS staff and adaptable for small and large group presentation, was used to accompany verbal presentations.[1] The slide/tape presentation focused on (1) the purpose of the study, (2) the major evaluation activities, (3) the Study Coordinator's role, (4) the program's participation and (5) the randomization process that would be used to select children for the Head Start program and the study. (See Script of Slide/Tape Presentation, Appendix E.)

Head Start Policy Council meeting. During every site visit an attempt was made to meet with the Head Start Policy Council or Committee, the policy-making group of parents and community representatives at each program. If it was not feasible to meet with the entire Council, a meeting was held with the Council Chairperson or representatives from the Policy Council.

The meeting with the Council or representatives typically consisted of a verbal and slide presentation, discussion and questions. Among the topics of discussion were: (1) the background of NTS and the evaluation; (2) how the program was selected to be in the study; (3) what the parents and children would be asked to do; (4) the process of randomization (in regular Head Start sites); and (5) the benefits to Head Start from the evaluation.

Data collection. The structured interviews (Program Description, Center Description and Teacher) and classroom observation schedules (ACES) provided the framework for data collection. Typically, the Head Start Program Director responded to the PDI, and a Center Director (or in some cases the Program Director or Education Coordinator) responded to the CDI. The length of time spent observing with the ACES in the classroom varied depending on whether the program was a full or half-day program; each observation was for a full classroom day,

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[1] Each site visitor took along a lightweight sound-and-picture-projection unit.

from arrival of the children to their departure. Most observers spent four to six hours in each of two classrooms. The lead teachers in these two observed classrooms were interviewed using the Teacher Interview.

Hiring a Study Coordinator. A local Study Coordinator was hired in 22[1] Head Start sites to serve as the NTS representative to help coordinate the study procedures from the field. Prior to the visit, advertisements for Study Coordinators were placed in the local newspapers of all 30 programs, and copies of the ad were sent to the Head Start program. Applicants were asked to send resumes or letters to NTS. The applications were screened by the site visitors, who then contacted the applicants to make arrangements for interviews during the site visits. Typically the site visitor interviewed three to six applicants and the Head Start Program Director then interviewed the top two or three candidates. The Program Director and the site visitor made the final hiring decision together. (See Study Coordinator Hiring, Appendix F.)

Documenting Site Visits

In addition to the data collection instruments, a written report was used to summarize the site visitor's experiences and the program's reaction to the overall study design. The site visitors documented both the positive and negative aspects of the visit. The report was also designed to serve as a checklist of the different tasks that were to be completed during the visit. Presented below is a brief description of each of the forms the site visitors completed. (See Site Report Booklet, Appendix G.)

A. The Meeting Schedule - was used to schedule the meetings conducted during the sit.

[1]Coordinators were not hired in some sites due to one of two reasons: 1) a lack of applicants for the position; or 2) an early decision that the program would not be participating in random assignment during the 1979 program year.

B. The Site Directory - was used to list the names and identifying information of key site personnel. The site directory was not only beneficial to the site visitors, but would also be useful to the next NTS employee visiting the site.

C. The Meeting Report Form - was used to summarize each of the week's meetings. The visitor recorded positive reactions to meetings as well as areas of concern. For example:

"The Program Director was very interested in the use of an Alternative Services group."

"The teachers were concerned about the classroom observations, and thought they might be disruptive."

D. The Site Contact Form - was completed for each of the following groups:

A. Program Management (Program and Center Directors; BES Coordinators)

B. Program Specialists (Educational Services Coordinators; Parent Coordinators)

C. Teachers

D. Grantee Staff

E. Delegate Staff

F. Public School Officials

G. Parent Policy Committee

H. Other

The Site Contact Form was used to record the group's reactions to key issues such as random assignment and testing.

E. The Question and Answer Form - was used to record key questions which were asked during the site visit. In all cases, the answer given was recorded.

F. General Impression - was completed at the end of the visit. It was intended to give anyone reading the report a "feeling" for the site: setting, people, atmosphere, etc.

Summary

Forty-six week-long site visits to BES and non-BES Head Start programs were accomplished in 10 harried weeks of traveling cross-country and back again. Despite the flurry of activity that was necessary to accomplish the entire task, the visits came off with few hitches. In only three cases were visits rescheduled and those were accomplished within the planned time period. In general the site visits were successful. Besides explaining the study to the local program staff, the site visitors collected:

46 Program Description Interviews

46 Center Description Interviews

87 Teacher Interviews

86 ACES Observations

46 Site Contact Forms

29 Reactions to randomization forms

The site visitors were also able to provide the developers of the instruments with practical, data-based feedback on needed revisions. They documented the programs' reactions to the study design, and made suggestions of ways to improve the design or the presentation of the design. Twenty-two Study Coordinators were hired; the description of this process and of the Study Coordinators' roles will be given in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF CHILDREN

This chapter deals specifically with the procedures surrounding the recruitment and selection of children who would be in the evaluation in the non-BES Head Start sites. The process of random assignment of children into Head Start or non-Head Start groups necessitated a number of specific and demanding tasks that NTS felt could be handled only by someone on site and in almost daily contact with the program staff. Early in the planning phases of the evaluation contract a decision was made to hire and train a network of locally based part-time staff members to conduct certain critical phases of the study and to serve as liaison between NTS and the local Head Start programs. Random assignment of Head Start applicants into Head Start and non-Head Start groups is a large step removed from the usual Head Start admission policies. It requires constant negotiations to implement random assignment in these programs, which tend to operate very autonomously, especially regarding their admissions policies. In order for this aspect of the study to succeed, NTS had to monitor recruitment and admissions within each program to ensure that there were sufficient numbers of children applying for the program and that the random assignment of the children was conducted as designed. For these reasons--to inform the programs of the procedures, to tailor the procedures to each program, and to implement the procedures--NTS decided to hire an individual at each site to serve as a liaison between the programs and NTS, called the Study Coordinator. In future

months this individual would be joined by another locally hired NTS staff member to assist in the administration of child tests in the fall.

The Study Coordinator

The Study Coordinator is vital to the success of this evaluation. He or she is the NTS representative on site who manages the study operations and provides information to NTS so that these operations can be tailored to meet the needs of each program without jeopardizing the integrity of the study. The Study Coordinator's responsibilities from May through December 1979 were:

- to develop a listing of Head Start eligible applicants from which random selection could be made; this included helping the program make decisions about which, if any, children the program felt they must serve
- if necessary, and if requested, to work with the local Head Start program to assist them in recruitment of children for Head Start
- to transfer the child lists to NTS for selection of the children
- to notify the program and parents of the children selected into both groups
- to obtain the parent's permission for the child's participation in the study
- to test the children who were selected for the study

Not all Head Start programs in the study were able to implement random assignment in the first year of the evaluation. A decision was made by ACYF and NTS to attempt randomization in 14 sites in 1979-80. Therefore, two basic study designs had been developed by the time of training the Study Coordinators. The type of design selected for each community was explained to the Study Coordinators and differences in activities were pointed out during training. The designs were:

1) Randomization: (Head Start Study Group and Alternative Services Group for 1979-80)

Of the applicants to the Head Start program, at least 60 were to be selected to receive comprehensive Head Start services and classes and to be in our study. Another group of 60 children were to be in the control group, and would receive Head Start dental services as an incentive to be in the study. The first group is known as the Head Start Study Group and the second group is known as the Alternative Services Group. Selection of children into these two groups was to be random.

2) Non-randomization: (Head Start Study Group only, for 1979-80)

Of the children already enrolled in the Head Start program, 60 were to be randomly selected for the study. This group is known as the Head Start Study Group. In programs with this design, there were no Alternative Services Groups.

Figure 4.1 lists the programs which were operating under each study design as of May 1979.

Study Coordinator Training

Purpose. During the week of May 21, 1979, the 22 Study Coordinators were brought to North Carolina from each of their home communities to attend the first of two week-long training sessions which would prepare them for the full scope of their jobs. Because of the sheer amount of information they would need to learn for their tasks, the training sessions had been planned so that the first session would cover their tasks for the summer and the second (in September), their tasks for the fall and winter. This first session focused on getting to know the Head Start programs, assisting the programs with recruitment of children and assisting NTS in the random selection of those children into Head Start and non-Head Start groups. As discussed in the Study Coordinator training manual, their tasks were:

- Keeping a good working relationship between NTS and the local Head Start program;
- Learning about the program, particularly the structure of each Head Start center;
- Explaining the study to the Head Start staff and to parents and children;

Figure 4.1

List of Programs by Type of Study Design as of May 1979

RANDOMIZATION: HEAD START STUDY GROUP AND ALTERNATIVE SERVICES GROUP

1. Asheville, NC*
2. Austin, TX*
3. Chandler, OK*
4. Denmark, SC*
5. Chicago, IL*
6. Detroit, MI*
7. Edenton, NC*
8. Elmsford, NY*
9. Lafayette, LA*
10. Maywood, IL*
11. New Bern, NC*
12. Norfolk, VA*
13. Saginaw, MI*
14. Sumter, SC*

NON-RANDOMIZATION: HEAD START STUDY GROUP ONLY

1. Baltimore, MD*
2. Columbus, OH*
3. Goldsboro, NC*
4. Greeley, CO*
5. Greensburg, PA
6. Jackson, MS*
7. Los Angeles, CA*
8. Oceana, WV
9. Price, UT
10. Redwood City, CA
11. Seattle, WA*
12. Terrell, TX
13. Uniontown, PA
14. York, AL*

*Indicates the presence of a Study Coordinator.

- Learning about the ways in which the program recruits families for Head Start and the ways the program has been deciding which families to select for Head Start, and possibly helping with recruitment.
- Providing information to NTS that would make it possible to select the children who would be in the study.
- Screening applicants for the position of child tester; and
- Exploring locations for testing.

Listed, but not covered in this training session, were tasks for the future months which would be covered in the second training conference:

- Explaining the study to parents, obtaining signed permission forms from parents agreeing to participate in the study and registering children for the study; and
- Administering individual child tests.

The complexity of the tasks that the Study Coordinators were to face required that they be thoroughly versed in the study but not overwhelmed with the intricacies of it. Training was conducted for the most part as training for the Site Visitors had been conducted. Each Study Coordinator would leave the conference with a knowledge of the study and its components, which they could then relay to the people in their communities. In addition they were prepared to relay information back to NTS to facilitate the random selection of children in their sites.

Maintaining site relations. The first portion of the conference was an indepth description of Head Start and the evaluation. It described how the Study Coordinators fit into the overall study design. In these sessions the Study Coordinators learned how to provide the programs and parents with information about the evaluation.

The general topics which were covered included:

- The structure of Head Start
- The design of the study
- Informing program personnel and parents about the study.

In addition a large amount of time was spent on specific evaluation issues which would require thorough explanation and which would probably elicit questions. These issues were:

- o Randomization
- o Dental services
- o Child testing

The Study Coordinators learned what randomization means, why it was necessary for this study and how it would be conducted in their progams. They were presented with information about dental services from ACYF, such as who was sponsoring it and how it would be administered. Only 14 of the programs would receive the dental services money because in only those 14 was there an opportunity for random assignment during 1979-80. Finally, the Study Coordinators were briefed on the type of child tests which would be administered and how the administration of the tests would be handled.

This portion of training was aimed at preparing the Study Coordinators to maintain the positive relationship between NTS and the sites which had been developed during site visits. The training provided them with a clear understanding of the study issues so that they could handle most questions which would arise during the months of the study, and could pass other questions on to NTS.

Coordinating randomization. The remainder of the training session dealt with the major Study Coordinator task--the implementation of randomization. Before NTS could implement the complex selection process, NTS needed additional information about each program and each center in the program. Random selection of the children was designed so that the program would be able to fill its capacity in each program option with the proportions they desired of children in different age groups. More information about the program and center operations

was needed, and a number of other informational and logistical procedures had to be completed before random selection could be instituted and before child testing could occur. Therefore Study Coordinators learned:

- To further describe the program to NTS: when does recruitment begin, end; what is the quota for three, four and five year olds, who does the program consider as children who must be served, how are enrollment decisions usually made?
- To describe each of the centers to NTS: what are the hours that the center operates, what is the total enrollment in each type program if there is more than one, what are the quotas for three, four and five year olds?
- To determine what dental services were available through the programs, since the non-Head Start children (Alternative Services Group) were to receive dental services as an incentive.
- To arrange for a testing location for the two to three months of child testing in the fall.
- To obtain a list of all children who had applied to the Head Start program, including information about them such as their age, sex, ethnicity, and program option to which they had applied.

Organization of the Field Staff

Five NTS Durham staff and 21[1] Study Coordinators composed the initial NTS Field Operations Unit for the summer months of 1979, prior to the first fall child test data collection. The organization of this unit is shown in Figure 4.2.

The Director of Field Operations and the four Regional Field Directors (RFDs) supervised the operations of the Study Coordinators from Durham via phone and correspondence. Each Regional Field Director had been assigned programs in three to four HEW Regions. At least twice weekly, and often daily, the Regional Field Director and her Study Coordinators would be in phone contact to discuss problems or issues unique to that particular site.

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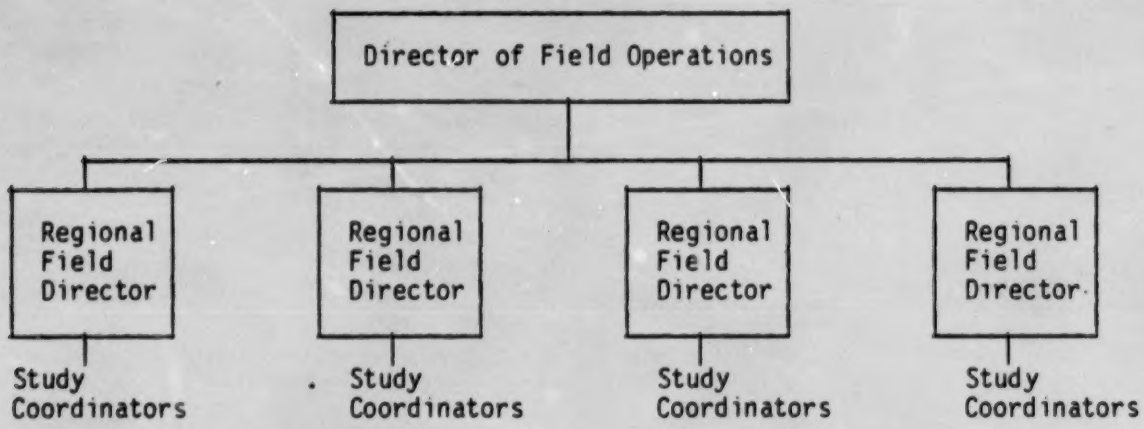
[1] The Study Coordinator from Los Angeles was killed in an airline crash on May 25, 1979.

Figure 4.2

Organization of Field Operations Unit



All contact with the Study Coordinators was handled directly through the assigned Regional Field Director. There were also weekly meetings of in-house field staff to discuss field problems and to resolve them. Each Regional Field Director prepared written questions from the field and their associated answers. These questions and answers were kept in a file for use in the preparation of explanatory materials for the future. Those which applied to all the sites were transmitted to them in the form of weekly memos.

Recruitment of Children[1]

The actual administration of child tests did not take place until the Fall of 1979. During June, July and August the Study Coordinators assisted the programs in recruiting children into Head Start and eventually into the study.

[1]Early in the summer, after the Study Coordinator had given NTS information about every center, two to four centers in each program were randomly selected for the study. The rest of this report deals with those study centers.

The assistance they gave the program staff varied. The Study Coordinators had been told to offer their assistance and to take their lead from the program staff. In some cases the staff welcomed an additional person for help and in others the staff did not want the bother of an outsider.

The Study Coordinators had received training on recruitment techniques, such as using public service announcements and other free advertising, during the May conference. In many cases they developed ideas of their own, such as designing posters or flyers. If one site had developed an effective technique it was transmitted to other programs. NTS developed documentation of the programs' recruitment techniques and the ones which were used by the Study Coordinators.

In each of the 14 programs in which random assignment was to take place, NTS set a goal in each center for the number of children necessary for random assignment to be successful. This goal was determined by an equation which began with the number of children to be served by the center. Then we subtracted places for those children who the program felt must be served (and therefore could not be put into the pool for random assignment). This left the number of places the program had available to be filled in the random assignment selection process. To this number were added the 60 slots for the children who would be in the study but who would not enroll in Head Start, the Alternative Services Group. For example,

250	Program's planned enrollment
-25	Spaces for children who must be served
225	Spaces to be filled from which 60 would be selected for the Head Start Study Group
+60	Spaces for the Alternative Services Group
285	Goal for recruitment, in addition to the 25 must-serve children above

The Study Coordinator and the Regional Field Director jointly determined this goal over the summer months through discussions and negotiations with the programs. Periodic checks were made by the Regional Field Director to determine if recruitment was in fact progressing at a rate which would result in a surplus of children sufficient to fill the Head Start program and to fill the Alternative Services Group. In seven cases, the eventual number of eligible applicants was not sufficient for random assignment, and these programs therefore became non-randomization sites.

Selection of Eligible Children

Random assignment can not be done by a simple drawing of enough children to fill each program. Selection of children must be done in such a way that each program's needs are met. Each program in the study served a different proportion of three, four and five year olds and some offered more than one program option. The selection procedure required that we fill the slots with children who met the required qualifications. In addition, programs had been allowed to designate some children into the "must serve" category. ("Must serve" is the NTS term for those children whom the program considers in such great need for services that they must receive Head Start services and can not be placed into the selection pool.) As a result of the complexity of the random assignment process, each child who applied for Head Start had to be listed along with his birthdate, ethnicity, sex and the program to which he had applied (morning, afternoon, full-day).

Randomization sites. In the random assignment programs the Study Coordinator recorded each child's name and the other required information onto a Child Selection Sheet developed by NTS. Those Child Selection Sheets were mailed to NTS, reviewed, edited and keyed into the computer for the selection of the Head Start children and the Alternative Services children. The computer was programmed to randomly select a group of children for the Head Start program. The

remaining children were classified as 'not in Head Start.' From these two groups, 60 or fewer children were randomly selected for the Head Start Study Group and 60 or fewer children for the Alternative Services Group.

Non-randomization sites. We were unable to complete the random selection process in sites where there was not a surplus of eligible applicants for the Head Start program. These programs are referred to as "non-randomization" sites. In these sites the Study Coordinator obtained a list of all of the children enrolled in the Head Start program and from that list 60 or less children were randomly selected for the Head Start Study Group. Of course, there was no Alternative Services Group in these sites.

Experimental sites. In addition, NTS developed two experimental approaches to recruiting children for the ASG in non-randomization sites. First, the "waiting list" procedure involved using the Head Start program's existing waiting list to select an ASG. Sumter, South Carolina participated in this experiment with a sample size of 60 in the HSSG and 54 in the ASG.

Second, a "day care" procedure was tried in two non-randomization sites. The procedure required that the on-site Study Coordinator solicit the cooperation of a local day care center which served the same catchment area as the Head Start program. From a list of children who attend day care, 60 or less children were randomly selected for the ASG. The two sites and their sample sizes were Chicago, Illinois (HSSG-60; ASG-61) and Asheville, North Carolina (HSSG-60; ASG-40).

Testing Locations

In addition to the recruitment of children the Study Coordinators were also responsible for finding locations in which testing could take place in the fall. Suggested locations were libraries, community centers or churches. In some cases rooms in the Head Start program offices were possibilities. The Study Coordinators investigated the locations in their communities and together

with their RFD decided upon a location or two which were most convenient for transporting children. In most cases, the SC tried to find a location which could be used free of charge or for a minimal charge.

NTS had originally planned to use neutral testing locations for both the HSSG and ASG children. This would have meant a testing room that was located outside the Head Start center. These plans were changed in favor of testing at the Head Start centers due to of a number of financial and logistical problems. Testing in a neutral location required the greatest amount of transportation for children. Financially this was a problem, but more important, insurance to cover liability if a child were hurt while being transported was unobtainable. Therefore, late in the summer the decision was reached to test all children in the Head Start centers when possible.

Summary

Study Coordinators were trained in May 1979 to act as liaison to the local non-BES Head Start programs and to begin the procedures for the random assignment or selection of children. During the summer months the Study Coordinators worked one-half to full-time. Study Coordinators in the random assignment programs recruited children for the programs and developed lists of all the eligible applicants. This process continued in each program until shortly before the program planned to notify parents of admission to the program. At that time NTS performed the random assignment and gave the information to the SC's and program. Programs then notified parents of admission into Head Start. Study Coordinators approached the families in the Alternative Services Group to ask them to participate in the study.

In those sites where there was not a sufficient surplus of children for random assignment or where children had already been enrolled, the Study

Coordinators listed the enrolled children; and the selection process was instituted for selecting the 60 Head Start children to be tested. In three sites procedures other than random assignment were developed for selecting an Alternative Services Group of children.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHILD TEST DATA COLLECTION: HEAD START SITES

Children in 28 Head Start and 13 BES programs were to be tested during the months of October, November and December of 1979. The preparation for this task required increasing the number of on-site staff to collect data, increasing the size of the supervisory field staff in Durham and training all field staff in the mechanisms required for testing several thousand children. This chapter concerns the data collection in 28 non-BES sites and is organized into four major sections: 1) increasing local data collection staff, 2) increasing supervisory field staff, 3) conducting child test training, and 4) conducting child testing. Testing in the BES sites is presented in Chapter Six.

Increasing Local Data Collection Staff

Because there would be 60 to 120 children tested in each Head Start site, NTS increased the size of its network of data collectors to at least two individuals at every site.[1] In July 1979 ads were again placed in local newspapers in each program community. Where there was a Study Coordinator on-site, the Study Coordinator reviewed and screened the applications. In the other sites, applications were sent directly to NTS where they were reviewed. In August NTS staff members who had administered the child tests during the pilot study (see Project Report 8, Generalizability Studies) visited each Head Start community for two to three days. During these trips they interviewed

[1] In two sites there were three data collectors because of circumstances which prevented the Study Coordinator from administering as many child tests as planned.

local people for the job of Local Data Collector (LDC). In those sites where there was no Study Coordinator one of the LDCs was designated as the Lead Local Data Collector. Her job was similar to that of the Study Coordinator in the random assignment sites.

The NTS staff members who conducted the hiring trips were looking for individuals who exhibited an ability to develop rapport with young children and who could closely follow the directions on the child tests. They asked the applicants to administer a few items from the child test battery during the hiring interview. By the end of August one to two LDCs had been hired in every program.

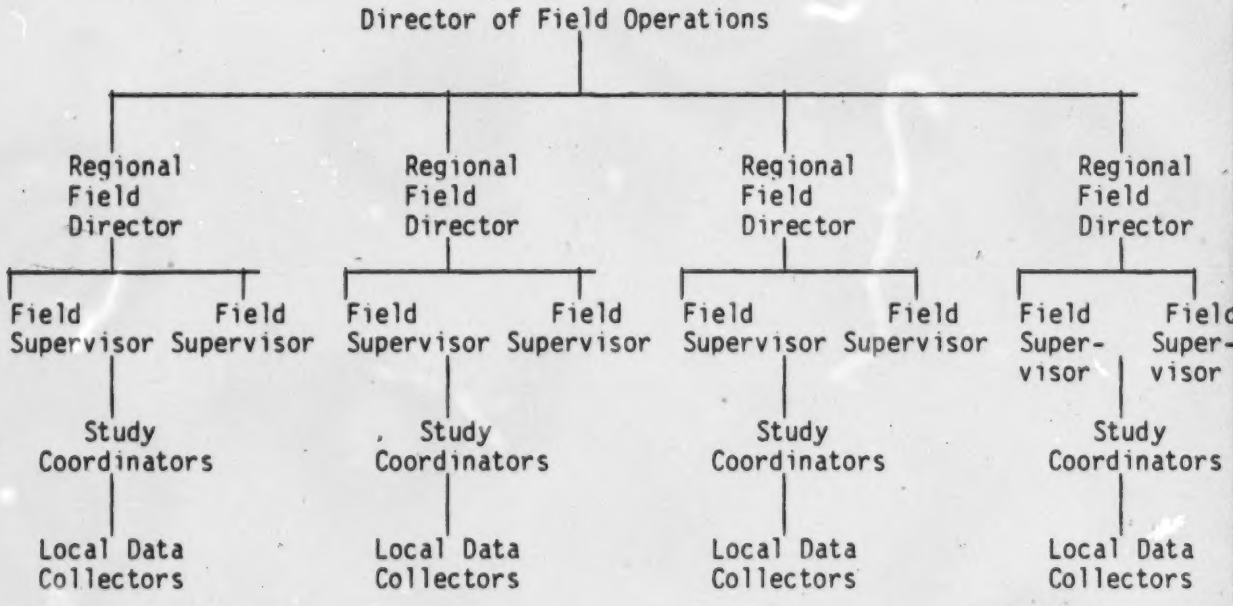
Increasing Supervisory Field Staff

The responsibilities of the NTS Field Operations Unit had increased by more than double and would increase even more when the BES sites were involved in child testing. The increased size of the on-site staff required an increase in the size of the Durham staff serving as supervisors. There were ten staff members on the evaluation project who had been trained in the administration of the child tests and the ACES observation system. During the Spring and Summer months these ten persons administered the child tests to over 200 children and administered the ACES in 100 classrooms for the generalizability studies which were being conducted. They also assisted in the revision of the child test battery and in the development of the training manual to accompany the test battery. In addition, these staff members had been involved with field operations in support roles. In August, however, their roles on the project broadened. Eight of them were added to the Field Operations Unit as Field Supervisors.

As Figure 5.1 illustrates, each Field Supervisor was assigned to one of the four Regional Field Directors. The RFD and the Field Supervisors on the team divided the programs within their regions among themselves so that each Field Supervisor and each RFD was now directly responsible for several Head Start and BES programs. Throughout the course of the fall data collection effort the Field Supervisor or the RFD supervised the field procedures and testing logistics in his/her assigned sites. The Regional Field Director served as a supervisor/advisor to the Field Supervisor. Problems were discussed among the Field Operations Unit staff at weekly meetings.

Figure 5.1

Organization of Field Operations Unit in Fall 1979



Child Test Training

By early September the entire in-house and on-site field staff had been hired. Training conferences had been planned for early September to train the on-site staff in the administration of child tests and transmitting the tests to NTS for scoring. Testing was to begin on October 1. Due to funding problems at ACYF, the training conferences planned for early September were postponed until early October.[1] Three conferences were held to train 57 field staff. The first was in Denver, Colorado, and two concurrent conferences were held the next week in Dallas, Texas. The training which was conducted covered two general topics: 1) child test administration[2] and 2) field procedures. NTS staff who had administered the child test battery for the pilot study developed the training materials and conducted the child testing portion of the training conference. The Regional Field Directors developed and conducted training on the field procedures portion of training.

The agenda for child test training, Figure 5.2, illustrates the schedule of activities for the trainees. Nine hours were spent presenting the child tests, twenty hours were spent in individual practice of their administration, and another ten hours were required to learn what to do with the tests before and after they were administered.

Child test administration. The battery of child tests contains ten subtests. During training, each subtest was presented and its purpose was discussed. Item by item the presenter described the administration procedures for each subtest. Next the field staff broke into pairs and practiced the

[1]Three conferences were originally planned to be held in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Denver, CO, in September 1979. Due to funding delays, however, these were cancelled and rescheduled for October. Therefore, although testing was planned to begin on October 1, it did not begin until October 22, three weeks later.

[2]The Child Test battery was selected and pilot tested in late Spring and Summer 1979. A description of the battery can be found in Project Report 3: Child Outcomes: Individual Child Testing Battery.

Figure 5.2

Head Start/BES Training Conferences-Fall 1979

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	8:30 - 10:15 General Test Administration 10:30 Basic Information	8:30 - 9:00 Review 9:00 - 10:30 Conceptual Grouping 10:45 - 11:30 Pictorial Memory 11:30 - 12:15 Draw-A-Child	8:30 - 11:30 PIPS Practice	8:30 - 10:00 Review Part II Tests and PIPS 10:15 - 12:15 Preparation For Testing	8:00 Room Checkout 8:30 - 10:45 Testing Logistics 11:00 - 12:00 Administrative Procedures
	12:15 - 1:30 Lunch	12:15 - 1:30 Lunch	11:30 - 12:45 Lunch	12:15 - 1:30 Lunch	Free
	1:30 - 2:45 Block Building 3:00 - 4:00 Number Readiness 4:00 - 5:00 Verbal Memory	1:30 - 2:30 Reading Readiness 2:45 - 3:30 Verbal Fluency 3:45 - 5:00 PIPS Introduction	12:45 - 2:15 Introduction to Field Procedures 2:30 - 5:00 Selection Procedures	1:30 - 5:30 Test Battery Review	1:00 - 5:00 Test Checkouts with Trainers
	5:00 - 7:00 Dinner	Free	5:00 - 7:00 Dinner	Free	
7:00 - 9:00 Introductory Comments Reception	7:00 - 9:00 Review Part I Tests	Free	7:00 - 8:30 Review Part II Tests and PIPS		

administration of the items. One staff member role-played the four year old and the other administered the items; then the roles were reversed. In every role-playing situation, the trainee taking the role of the child had a script which indicated how s/he should be behaving and answering the questions as a four year old.

There were enough trainers in every session so that trainees could be monitored closely while they were practicing the test items. The trainees were required to administer the test items many times during training:

- o after each subtest was taught
- o after the first five subtests were taught
- o after the last five subtests were taught
- o after all ten subtests had been taught

Trainees were checked out on their administration of the test battery at the end of training. The training staff noted any problems with the test administration. Data collectors were to be further monitored on-site during actual child testing. Eventually, 54 of the 57 trainees were allowed to proceed with testing on-site since they had reached the necessary level of proficiency.

Field procedures training. Child testing was the major focus of the fall activities in the evaluation sites. However, there were a number of activities which had to preceed the testing of any children and before the test materials were ready to be sent to NTS for scoring. In the field procedures section of the training conference, the on-site staff learned how to:

1. Inform the Head Start Program staff of the children selected for the Head Start Study Group and the Alternative Services Study Group.
2. Approach and obtain permission from parents for their child's participation in the evaluation.
3. Register children for the evaluation.
4. Schedule the child tests with parents or Head Start staff.
5. Arrange for transportation of the children and parents to the testing location.
6. Prepare and mail the completed forms and test booklets to NTS.

Because of the large amount of material to be covered during training the manual was accompanied by a set of pre-training exercises designed to test the comprehension of the trainees on the materials and procedures in the manual. These pre-training exercises were collected at the beginning of each conference and scored. The exercises gave the trainers an idea of the level of understanding the trainees had gathered from the manual. The results were used to tailor the training sessions to the needs of the trainees.

The training for field procedures was conducted by the Regional Field Directors. It was organized into sessions which corresponded to the chapters in the training manual. Since many of the field staff were new to the project (36 Local Data Collectors and Lead Local Data Collectors), much of the background information on the program had to be covered again as it had been covered in the first training session for Study Coordinators in May.

The Study Coordinators and Lead Local Data Collectors were the persons responsible for the sites, but all of the on-site staff were trained in all aspects of the work because of the heavy workload anticipated. The sessions were conducted as the child test training had been conducted. That is, every procedure or form was presented, discussed and role played or completed by the trainees. Each trainee had an opportunity to practice every form and procedure.

Conducting the Child Tests in Head Start Sites

Between mid-October and mid-December 1979, 1109 children were tested in the Head Start communities. This was the culmination of a large number of activities discussed below: selecting the children, notifying the programs, confirming testing locations, contacting parents, scheduling, transporting children, testing and monitoring.

Selecting the children. In the seven sites where random assignment had been possible, the children in the Head Start Study Group (HSSG) and the Alternative Services Group (ASG) were selected for those groups prior to the training conferences. In the remaining 14 sites with Study Coordinators, the Head Start Study Group had been chosen from those children already enrolled in the program. In those programs where there had been no Study Coordinator, the children to be included in the Head Start Study Group had yet to be chosen. The first task for the newly hired on-site staff in these communities was to prepare a listing of all the children who had been enrolled in the program in the selected center(s). This list was to be prepared just as the lists for the other sites had been prepared during the summer. During the first week after training the on-site staff in these sites devoted their time to obtaining and transmitting these lists to NTS for selection of the children. (Chapter Four describes the selection process in more detail.)

Notifying the programs. Once the selection procedure had been completed, NTS supplied the local evaluation staff with three separate computer printouts of the children and their selected groups. The printouts contained the following lists of children:

Head Start Children: Those children in the random assignment programs who had been selected to be in Head Start; or, in the non-random assignment programs, those who had already been enrolled in the program.

Head Start Study Group (HSSG): Those children who had been selected from among the children enrolled in Head Start to be in the study.

Non-Head Start Children: Those children who not had been selected to receive Head Start comprehensive services, but who would potentially be in the Alternative Services Group (ASG) and receive dental services if the parents agreed to participate.

The local NTS staff were responsible for supplying the Head Start Program Directors with these computer listings. Copies also went to the Study Coordinators and Field Supervisors. They reviewed each listing to verify that all of the children on each list was receiving the correct services (Head Start or no-Head Start). Additionally, the Study Coordinator or Lead Local Data Collector verified each child's name, birthdate, ethnicity, sex, and the type of program to which the child was to be admitted (morning, afternoon or full-day).

Confirming the test location. The next step for the on-site staff was to confirm arrangements for a testing location. Over the previous months, the Study Coordinator or NTS Durham staff had arranged for locations in which to administer the tests. Most of these arrangements had been completed and confirmed by letter prior to training. The on-site staff contacted each sponsoring group and confirmed the arrangements in person upon returning to the community.

Contacting parents. A major task for the on-site staff was to contact parents in order to explain the study and to obtain their permission for participation. No child could be tested unless parents had first been informed of the study and had given their written permission. The process of securing parent permission began as soon as the on-site staff finished training and continued in many sites until the day that testing was discontinued.

Upon returning to their communities, on-site staff divided the children and parents among themselves so that contacting them could be handled most efficiently. Most often the first contact with a parent was by phone. The parent was called and the study was explained in enough detail that an appointment could be made for the NTS staff person to meet with the parent to obtain permission. The phone call was always followed by a personal meeting between parent and staff member. During this meeting the parent was given a

copy of the parent brochure (see Appendix A, Parent Brochure). The Study Coordinator, Lead Local Data Colector or Local Data Collector then answered any questions the parents might have and more fully explained the study. Once a parent was aware of the study and its requirements, the NTS staff member asked the parent to sign a parent permission form and a form which allowed NTS to pay the parent a participation fee of five dollars once the child was tested. The on-site staff member also completed a Child Data Form which supplied NTS with information about the parents and child and which would assist in helping to find them for each data collection period over the length of the longitudinal study. It also identified the child as belonging to one of the three study groups (HSSG, ASG, or BES).

In many cases the Study Coordinator or local Data Collector had to make many contacts with parents before obtaining the interview. In addition, many of the parents did not have phones, and many of the phones had been disconnected or changed from the time that the original numbers had been obtained. In those cases, the staff members had to use their ingenuity to find the parents. They often went in person to a parent's home, sent letters or left notes with neighbors to try to contact the parent. In few cases did the parents refuse to participate once they had been contacted. But, because of the mobility of this population, a large number of the parents either could not be contacted or their child was no longer attending the Head Start program because the parents had moved. The Study Coordinator or Local Data Collector completed a Child Data Form on each child, indicating whether or not the parents were finally contacted and whether or not they had given permission for their child to be in the study. This form documented for NTS the status of all the children in the study.

Monitoring child tests. Before the full scheduling of child tests was implemented Study Coordinators and Local Data Collectors had been told to plan

at least two testing sessions to occur the second week after they returned from training. NTS staff members who had taught them the tests during training made site visits to their programs at that time to monitor these first few tests. The purpose of these trips was to monitor the administration of the tests in real testing situations to assure that administration was occurring in a uniform manner. Nearly all Study Coordinators and Local Data Collectors were thus monitored. However, due to budgetary considerations, three SCs and two LDCs who had been highly successful during training sessions were not monitored on-site by NTS Durham staff. In addition to the monitoring trips by NTS-Durham staff, the on-site staff each monitored the administration of one test per week given by their partner at the site.

Scheduling the tests. On-site staff scheduled child tests as they received parent permission. In most sites, the children were tested during the Head Start day. Therefore, the Study Coordinator or Local Data Collector scheduled the testing session for each Head Start child with the Head Start teacher. The tests were scheduled so that they would not conflict with meal or snack times or with nap time. This constrained the number of tests possible on any one day because often there were only two or three hours during each day in which testing could occur. However, it assured that the children could perform at their optimum level. In some sites, the children were tested outside of the Head Start class day; then the Study Coordinator or Local Data Collector arranged the schedule with the parents. For the Alternative Services Group children the Study Coordinator scheduled testing with the parents. The Study Coordinators attempted to scheduled ASG and HSSG children at the same times of the day and during the same weeks throughout the study.

Transporting the children. In those cases where the child was tested outside of the Head Start center or when the parent had to bring the child to

the testing location, the testers had to arrange for the transportation of the child. NTS staff members did not transport children or parents in their own personal cars because of insurance limitations. They were authorized to reimburse parents for the use of their own cars or for public transportation for the round trip from home to the testing location.

Child test administration. Each child in the study was tested in a 45-minute individually-administered testing session. The testing session was divided into two sessions with a five-minute break between. The tester administered the test battery in a prescribed fashion in a set order of administration. At the end of each testing session the tester edited the test battery booklet before sending it to NTS for scoring. For more complete descriptions of the test battery, see Project Report 3, Child Outcomes: Individual Testing Battery for the Fall 1979 Cohort.

Managing On-Site Operations

Every team of site staff met each week to discuss the past week's work and to plan for the next week. During these meetings the SC or LLDC was responsible for compiling a record of the week's completed work, including the names of children whose parents had been contacted and the outcome of each contact. They recorded the name of each child who had been scheduled for testing and on whom testing had either been completed or rescheduled. The SC or LLDC also collected all completed child tests, Parent Permission Forms and Child Data Forms and transmitted them to NTS for processing. Every two weeks the SC or LLDC transmitted the Time and Expense Reports for the on-site staff in his/her site.

Supervising Data Collection Operations from NTS

Throughout the Fall data collection effort the NTS field operations staff kept in almost daily contact with their assigned on-site staff. The lead person

at each site contacted his/her assigned Field Supervisor or Regional Field Director at least twice a week, often daily. These phone calls served several purposes. First, the NTS-Durham staff member assisted the on-site staff member with any problems with program staff, with parents or with particular items of the tests. They found answers to problems such as what to do if a parent had moved from town and the child was living with a grandparent. The number of children to be tested at each program varied depending on whether or not the site had an Alternative Services Group and whether there had been a great number of dropouts. The Durham staff supervised the progress of child test production over the weeks of the Fall data collection. A goal was set for each program, week-by-week, for the production of child tests in that program. Twice a week the SC or LLDC reported to the staff in Durham the production for that week. In this way, the Durham staff could keep track of the rate of testing and could help if problems arose. In one case, a local Data Collector in one site became ill and child tests were not being completed at the scheduled rate. On-site staff in a town nearby were able to travel to that particular site to assist in the child testing because the problem was seen promptly enough to take these steps.

Field Operations staff at NTS met each week to discuss the problems and production in the field. A master list was kept of production reported in all sites. At these meetings staff members exchanged ideas about how to approach problems that were occurring in their sites. In addition, each Field Supervisor and Regional Field Director wrote weekly and monthly reports on each of their assigned programs, including a description of their problems and their production for the week. These reports and the weekly meetings alerted the staff to problems which might have to be handled by the Project Director or a Regional Official.

Summary

In all, 1109 children (879 Head Start and 230 Alternative Services Group) were tested in the non-BES Head Start sites in the Fall of 1979. In the ten weeks between October 1 and December 7, a network of 54 on-site data collectors had been trained, had informed the programs of the children selected for the study, had contacted and obtained permission to test children, and had completed tests on over 1100 of them. These staff members received constant phone and in-person supervision from the NTS Field Operations staff.

CHAPTER SIX

CHILD TEST DATA COLLECTION: BASIC EDUCATIONAL SKILLS SITES

In the BES programs fewer children were to be tested (15 per site) than in the Head Start sites, and there was no random assignment of children into the program. For these reasons and for cost considerations, NTS-Durham staff conducted the test administration in the BES sites. The preparation for these child tests, therefore, required different training, focusing mostly on logistical preparations. The following are the BES programs which were to be involved in child testing in the fall of 1979: Albuquerque, New Mexico; Amarillo, Texas; Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; East Boston, Massachusetts; Gary, Indiana; Huntington, West Virginia; Knoxville, Tennessee; Naples, Florida; Pleasant Hill, California; Red Lake, Minnesota; Riverside, California; Russellville, Arkansas; and Topeka, Kansas. These were all internal BES programs which had been originally funded in September 1978.

NTS Data Collectors

The Field Supervisors had pilot tested the child test battery, developed and conducted the training on the battery, and were to monitor the tests on-site in the Head Start sites. They were also the data collectors, or child testers, in the BES sites. At the time that Field Supervisors and Regional Field Directors were assigned Head Start programs to supervise they were also assigned internal and external BES programs in their regions. An attempt was made to distribute equally internal and external model BES programs among all of

the Field Supervisors. Since the external programs were not part of the Fall data collection effort, and only 13 of the original BES internal models were continuing with the program, each of the eight Field Supervisors had only one or two BES programs in which to test. Prior to testing, a decision was made with ACYF not to test children in two of the thirteen sites. The sites had large proportions of Hispanic families in their BES programs; and, although the tests had versions developed in Spanish, the parent materials had not been acceptably translated into Spanish. This resulted in 11 BES programs which participated in the child testing effort.

Training

Unlike the training for the Head Start on-site field staff, the training for the BES testers (Field Supervisors) took place as a series of mini-sessions. The first session was designed to provide the Field Supervisors with an understanding of the BES programs and of the way in which BES staff related to the Head Start staff at each of their programs. Field Supervisors were briefed on the protocol of each of their visits. Next, the BES Field Director reviewed with the Field Supervisors the manner in which the Head Start data collection forms would be used in the BES sites and pointed out instances where a form might differ somewhat for use in BES. Finally, the Field Supervisors were supplied with a phone contact system developed especially for setting up the logistics of testing children in the BES programs.

Prior to the Testing Visit

NTS planned to send a Field Supervisor to each BES program for five days, during which all 15 child tests were to be administered. Obviously, five days would not allow the Field Supervisor time to arrange for a testing location, to select children, to contact parents to obtain permission, and to schedule the children for testing sessions. These logistics had to be completed prior to the

visit, and the BES program staff were extremely helpful in carrying them out. The method by which these steps were accomplished was a series of phone contacts and follow-up confirmation letters between the Field Supervisor and the BES Program Manager. Several weeks prior to the scheduled site visit the Field Supervisor for each program began a series of weekly phone contacts with the BES Program Manager. These contacts followed a prescribed sequence in which the following steps were completed:

1. A list of all BES children in the selected study centers was obtained from the BES Program Manager.
2. The children to be tested were randomly selected from this list and the names sent to the BES program staff.
3. Parent permission was obtained by the BES Program Manager. Parent brochures and other materials had been sent to the BES Program Manager as had the permission forms and Child Data Forms.
4. A testing location was secured in the BES center or program facilities.
5. Children were scheduled for tests during the Head Start day.

Each of these steps was discussed by the Field Supervisor and the BES Program Manager, who together decided upon the best method to accomplish the task. Each decision was confirmed in writing through a letter to the BES program and through a memo to the BES Field Operations Director. In addition, timelines were arranged for each task. A master list of steps and timelines was posted and updated each week.

Conducting the Child Tests in the BES Sites

During the calls prior to the testing visit the Field Supervisor had arranged to arrive at the BES program on Monday morning of the testing week. Although the main purpose of the visit was to test the 15 selected children, the

Field Supervisor met with the Program Director and the BES staff. The Field Supervisor explained what she or he would be doing for the week and answered any questions the staff had about the evaluation.

Next, the Field Supervisor went over the forms that the BES staff had completed on each child and family. If there were corrections or additions to the information needed, the Field Supervisor contacted the parent directly and obtained the information. During the remainder of the week the Field Supervisor tested the 15 BES study children, usually three to five each day. In only a few cases, children were absent from school that week and so were not tested. The test batteries and all of the forms were the same as those used in the Head Start sites.

In both the Head Start sites and BES sites a record was kept of each child's teacher at the time of testing.

Summary

One hundred fifty-three BES children were tested in 11 BES sites in the Fall of 1979. Testing was conducted by NTS-Durham field staff; most of the preparatory arrangements for testing were done by the local BES program staff.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY--THE SCOPE AND COMPLEXITY

In Chapters 1 through 6 of this volume the evaluation design and activities are reported. This chapter summarizes those activities and discusses the accomplishments of the evaluation in light of the scope of the work required and in respect to the complexity of the tasks.

Scope of the Design

Status of the programs. Figure 7.1 illustrates the various stages in changes of program status throughout the duration of the study for the Head Start programs. In December 1978, 30 programs were randomly selected for participation in the evaluation. Throughout the next two and a half months procedures were implemented to notify the regional ACYF officials and the programs of the selection (as described in Chapter One). Shortly before site visits were to be made, regional officials requested that two of the programs be eliminated from the sample because of funding or grantee difficulties. These programs were eliminated and were replaced by the next program in the random stratification cells from which they had been selected. By the end of site visits, two more programs were dropped from the study, but not replaced. A program in California was eliminated at the program's request and a program in Florida was eliminated at the request of regional officials, due to impending termination of funding.

During the site visits in the Spring of 1979, 14 of the 28 remaining programs were identified as probable sites for random assignment of children; in the other 14, there were no possibilities for comparison groups for that year.

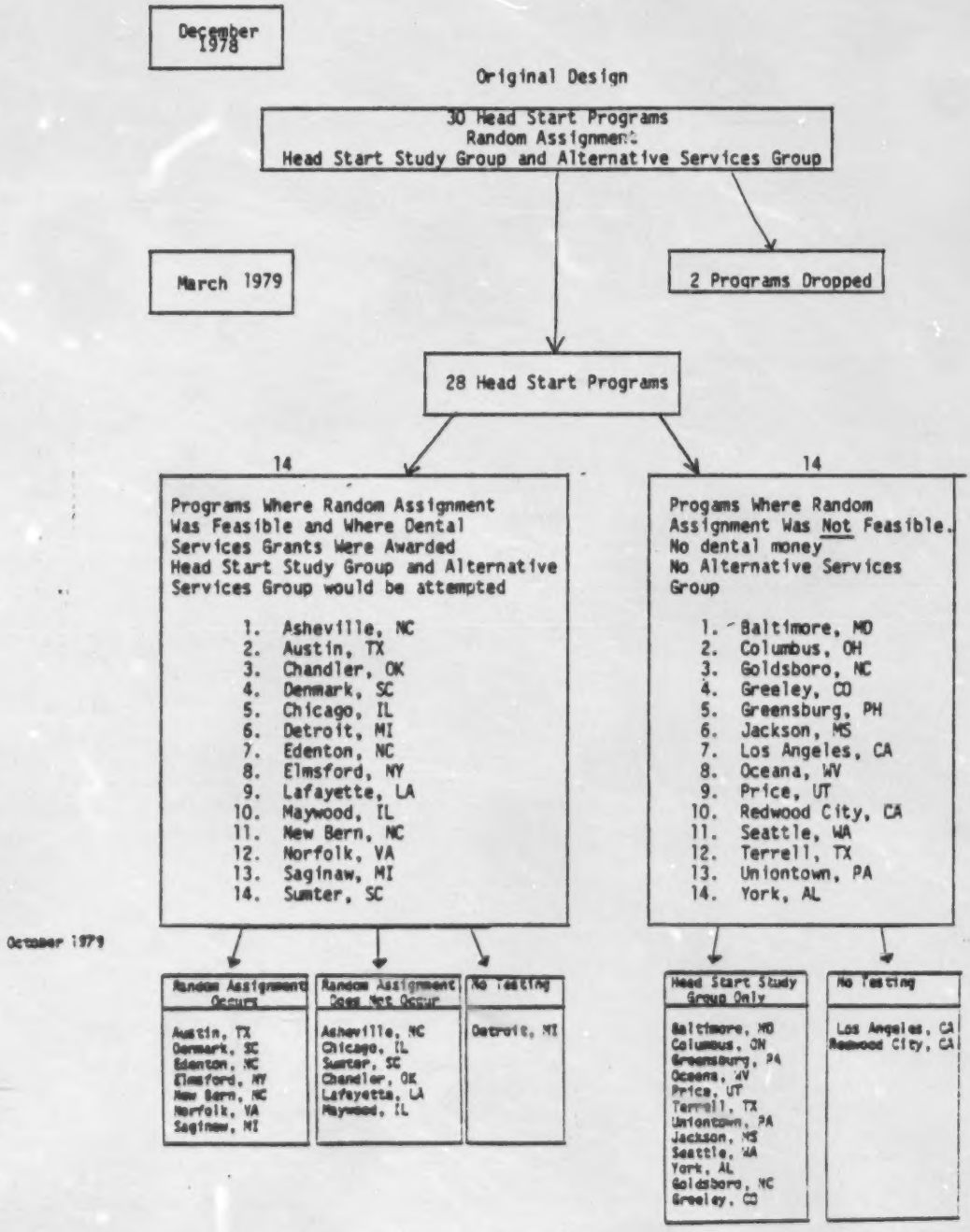
In nine of these programs enrollment had either already occurred by the time of the site visit or would occur so soon after the visits that there was no time for NTS to implement random assignment. In the other five sites, the programs had such serious doubts that sufficient extra children could be recruited that it was decided not to attempt randomization for 1979-80. In those 14 non-randomization sites, the 60 children to be tested would be randomly selected from among those enrolled in the program. In the 14 other programs, NTS would attempt the random assignment of children into the Head Start and non-Head Start groups. Then the 60 Head Start Study Group children and 60 Alternative Services Group children would be selected for testing from among them. Thus, between March and October, the sites were split into two groups of 14 sites each, as shown in Figure 7.1.

During the months following the site visits, the Study Coordinators provided NTS with information on the status of recruitment in the 14 randomization programs. By October 1979, it became clear that in six of these programs there were insufficient numbers of surplus children to comprise comparison groups. In one of the 14 randomization programs, approval for the study from the research department of the public school system (Grantee for the program) was not granted in time for testing. Therefore, after October 1979, of the 14 randomization sites, there were seven sites where random assignment occurred, six sites where random assignment did not occur and one site with no selection or testing.

Of the 14 programs where randomization was <u>not</u> to be attempted this program year, two of the programs did not participate in data collection this year. In Los Angeles, California, the program was undergoing an administrative change of Grantees and asked to wait for one year before participating in the study. The program in Redwood City, California, was eliminated from this fall's data

Figure 7.1

Schematic Presentation of Program Status
of Head Start Programs Throughout the Evaluation



collection as not all of the parent information materials had been adequately translated into Spanish for use by local data collectors. Therefore, of the 14 non-randomization sites, 12 participated in testing two did not.

Figure 7.2 illustrates the status of the BES programs in the evaluation. In October 1978, 17 "internal model" BES grants were awarded. All 17 programs were visited in the Spring of 1979. In September 1979, 13 of the 17 were given continuation grants. Testing was not conducted in Albuquerque, New Mexico, or Riverside, California (two of the original 13 internal BES programs) because the parent information materials had not been adequately translated into Spanish.

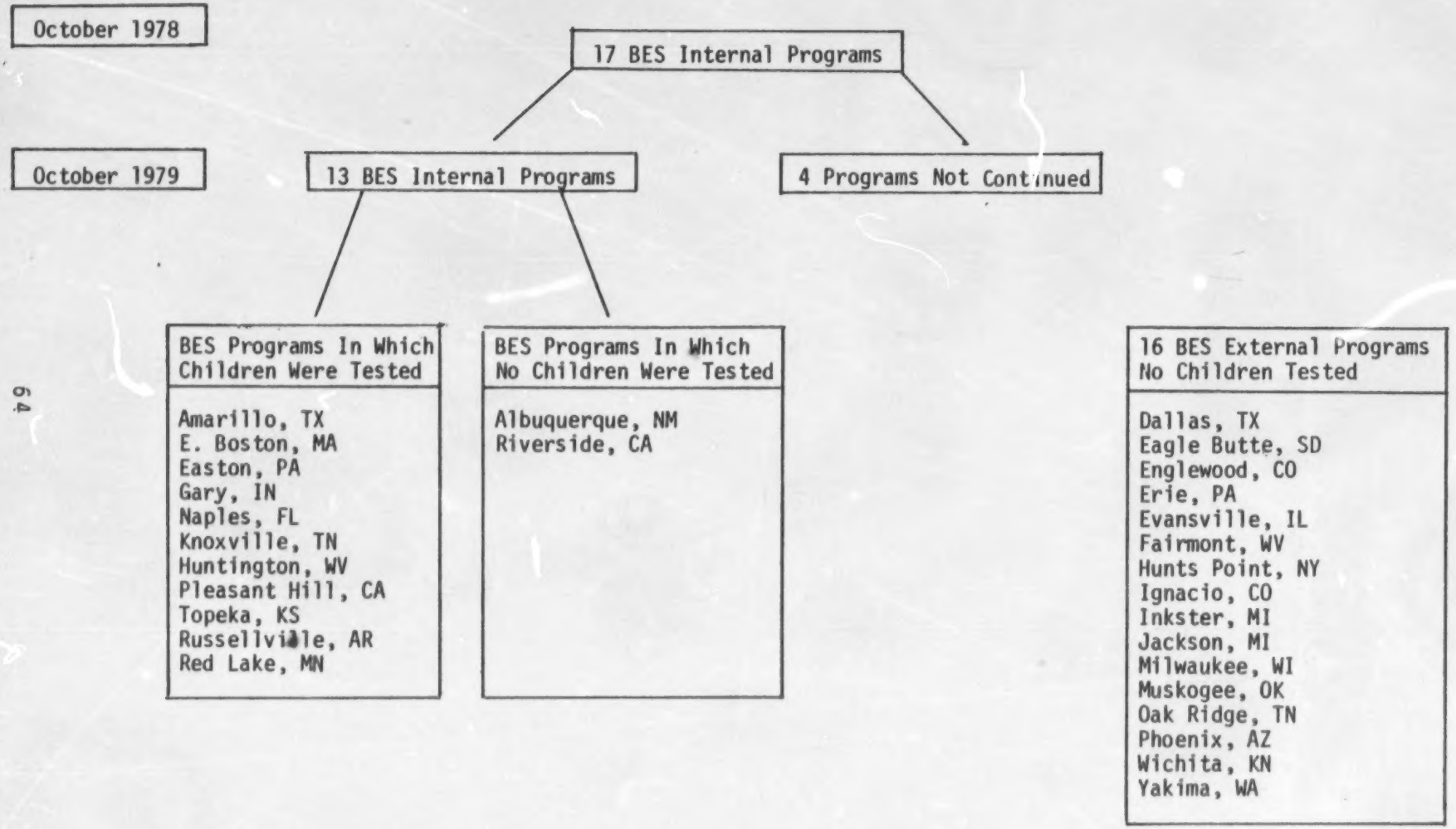
There were also 16 new grants awarded to "external model" BES programs in September 1979. Since the 16 external programs entered the demonstration program only a month before testing, they did not participate in child testing in Fall 1979.

Evaluation staff. By the end of the first phase of this evaluation, the NTS Durham staff had grown from 8 senior professionals to a staff of over 29 senior and junior professionals and support staff. By September 1979, 57 additional on-site staff had joined the evaluation to conduct the data collection in the local communities, swelling the number of persons employed by NTS and involved in the study to 86.

A total of 70 people were trained by NTS staff members in three separate training efforts (Site Visitor training, 12 professional staff members; Study Coordinator training, 22; and Child Test training, 21 Study Coordinators plus 36 Local Data Collectors). Training was based on over 500 pages of materials developed by NTS staff members and compiled into training manuals. NTS staff members prepared the written materials and developed procedures for conducting the training sessions. These procedures included role playing sesions, video taped training sessions, and simulations.

Figure 7.2

Program Status for BES Evaluation



Respondents. There were 47 Head Start and BES programs involved in some manner in the first 12 months of the evaluation effort. Of these, 30 were randomly selected Head Start programs and 17 were BES programs. Sixteen external BES programs joined the evaluation in September 1979. Fifty-seven programs (28 Head Start, 13 internal BES, and 16 external BES) are currently involved in the study.

During the site visits and child testing months, NTS staff members administered a large number of interviews, observations, and child tests, totaling 1527 separate instruments. They included:

46	Program Description Interviews
46	Center Description Interviews
87	Teacher Interviews
86	ACES Observations
1262	Child Test Batteries
1527	TOTAL

In addition, over 200 child tests and 120 ACES observations which were administered during pilot tests (see Project Report 8, Generalizability Studies), and 1263 parent permissions were obtained prior to the child tests.

Reflected in the scope of the work are the over 55,000 miles driven by Study Coordinators and Local Data Collectors to obtain parent permission and to reach the children for testing. (This averaged out to a little more than 49 miles per child test.) NTS Durham staff made over 85 trips to Head Start and BES communities to collect data, hire on-site staff, monitor data collection, and resolve problems about the evaluation. Numerous letters and phone calls to each program were required to inform programs about the study. NTS also developed a bi-weekly bulletin to on-site staff and a monthly bulletin to the BES programs.

Project activities. In the 65 weeks spanned by the evaluation contract, 52 weeks were spent in specific logistical tasks. Figure 7.3 is a presentation of the weeks spent on selected tasks.

Figure 7.3

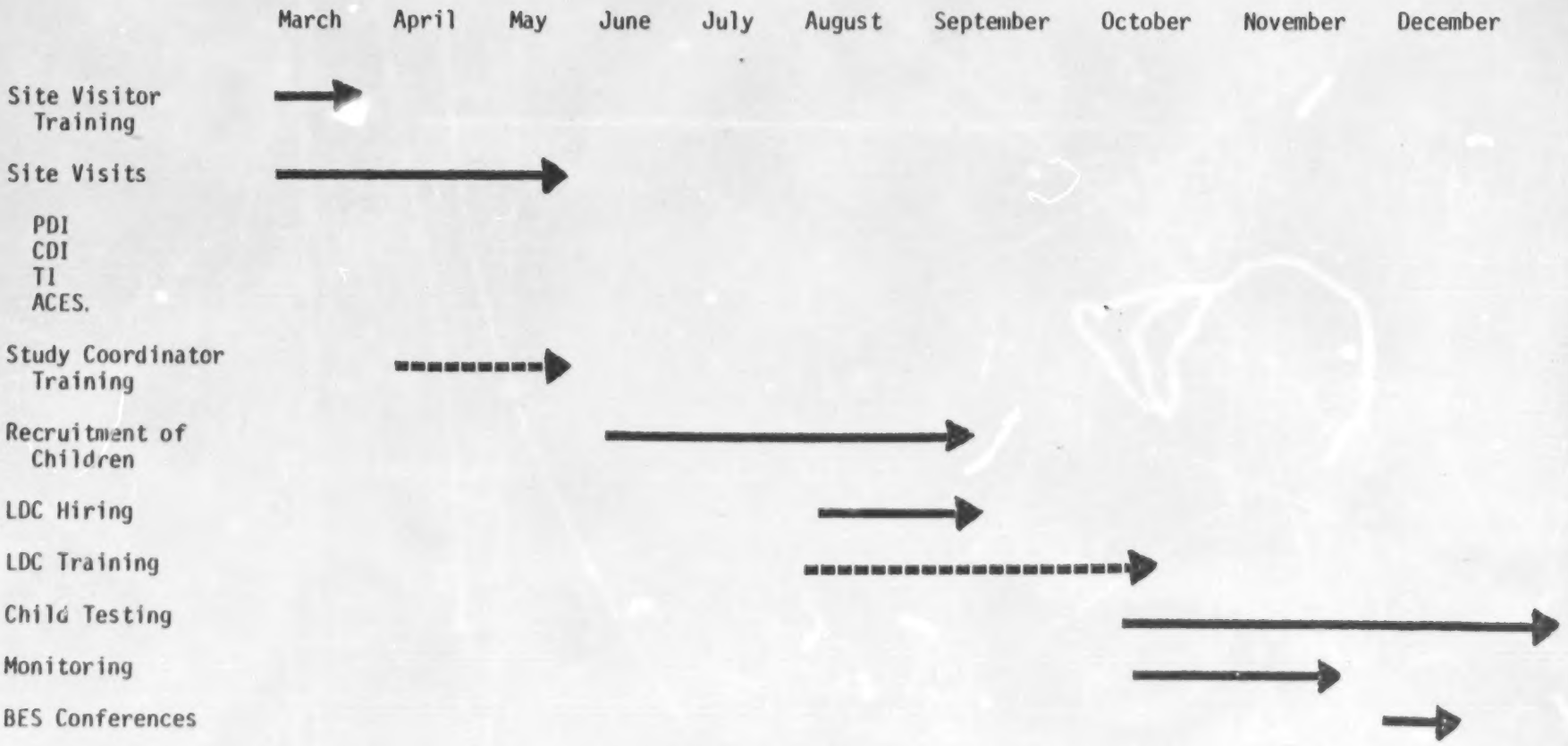
Expenditures of Time for Evaluation Activities

Number of Weeks	Activities	Period
10	Site Visits to Head Start and BES Programs	Spring 1979
	Training Conferences:	
1	Site Visitor	March 1979
1	Study Coordinator	May 1979
2	Local Data Collector	October 1979
14	Recruitment of Children	June-August 1979
3	LDC hiring trips	August 1979
4	Monitoring trips	October 1979
10	Child Testing	October-December 1979
4	BES Conferences	October 1978 - December 1979
52	TOTAL	

Figure 7.3 illustrates the enormous scope of work required to implement the study from a logistical standpoint alone. It does not portray the amount of work demanded to prepare for each task nor does it show the overlapping nature of implementing one task while simultaneously preparing for another. Figure 7.4 shows the timeline for the logistical activities of this evaluation between March 1 and December 31, 1979.

Figure 7.4

Time Line for the Logistics of the Evaluation



dashed lines=preparation for
solid lines=training

Complexity of the Tasks

There were a number of factors which contributed to the complexity of logistical implementation of the study design, including: 1) the large number of programs and their staggered entrance into the evaluation; 2) the variety of types of programs by randomization status and BES or Head Start status; 3) the issues surrounding the dental services incentive grants, and 4) the necessity for a network of local data collectors.

The number of programs. Thirty Head Start and thirty-three BES programs entered the evaluation during the 15 months of the evaluation. In addition, the programs entered the evaluation at different times, as seen below, which compounded the complexity.

	BES Programs	HS Programs
October 1978	17 Internals Funded	
January 1978		30 Programs Randomly Selected
March 1978		2 Programs Excluded
September 1979	13 Internals Refunded 16 Externals Funded	

With each entrance of programs, NTS staff were required to make contact, develop rapport, and implement the study activities with the program staff. Often the rapport building was taking place in some new programs while more substantive data collection activities were taking place in other programs. This required NTS staff to concentrate their efforts on several tasks at once. It also required that someone track the status of each program through the stages of the evaluation; at no time could all programs be treated as a group.

The variety of program types. In addition to the status differences caused by varying entrance points into the evaluation, there are also status differences because of the type of programs being evaluated. The most obvious difference from the start of the study was the difference between Head Start and

BES programs. This was also perhaps the least complex difference. There were at least two kinds of BES programs and five variations of Head Start programs. There were:

1. BES internal-model programs
2. BES external-model programs
3. Head Start programs which attempted and succeeded with random assignment; randomly assigned Alternative Services Group (ASG)
4. Head Start programs which attempted random assignment but used a waiting list or day care program as the ASG
5. Head Start programs which attempted random assignment but did not succeed and had no ASG
6. Head Start programs which did not attempt random assignment, but had a Study Coordinator
7. Head Start programs which did not attempt random assignment, and had no Study Coordinator

The variety of programs necessitated a complex organization of staff, materials, procedures and presentations. During site visits the site visitors had to be prepared to answer questions; and not only the questions but the answers differed from site to site. For example, in random assignment sites, Program Directors were told that NTS would perform the random assignment and would then tell the program who was selected to be enrolled in Head Start. In the non-random assignment sites, NTS asked the Program Director to tell us who was enrolled. Appropriate materials for parents had to be developed for each variation (Head Start, Alternative Services, BES). Contact with each site had to be carefully documented, as did contact with each Regional office because the status of the site could change (e.g., an insufficient number of surplus children would change a randomization program to non-random status). Field staff had to be updated almost daily during recruitment phases to understand the status of the program so that questions could be answered based on current status.

Dental services incentive grants. ACYF provided grants to programs in the Head Start evaluation where there was a possibility for a comparison group of children. The grants for those 14 sites were made directly from ACYF to the local grantee. This money was intended to provide dental services to the comparison group children as an incentive to participate in the evaluation. There were several problems with the incentive of dental services. For example, midway through the NTS site visits (during which we discussed the incentive grants) ACYF decided to change from providing money for general health services to the more restricted dental services. In addition, it was the opinion of many programs that the money was insufficient and that dental services were not a sufficient incentive to the families.

Logistically, there was also the complex problem of the programs' misunderstanding of NTS's involvement in the dental services grants. The money came directly from ACYF to the programs through the Regional offices. NTS did not have the authority (nor did we attempt) to oversee the grants. The regions were responsible for administering the grants, and the regions differed in their procedures. Although NTS was involved only in notifying ACYF of the programs which should receive the money, many programs understood the evaluation and dental services grants to be one and the same. They mistakenly believed they would have to account to NTS for the money and could ask for our guidance.

NTS had presented the programs with the introductory information about the grants. This was to be the extent of NTS's involvement with these grants. However, the programs had first been told of the incentive grants during NTS's site visit and so linked the grants more directly to the evaluation and to NTS than was actually the case. Program staff had many questions and concerns about the incentive grants. They turned to NTS staff members for the answers. NTS in

turn directed them to their Regional officials. However, all of this required much NTS staff time and often confused the programs. It also seemed to cause them to question NTS's procedures because we could not always answer their questions.

The network of Local Data Collectors. Because of the lengthy recruitment and testing period in the Head Start programs, the study design required a network of local people to conduct the study on-site. Supervision of over 50 persons in 28 communities in every region of the country is a complex task. Budgetary considerations, of course, precluded extensive on-site supervision requiring that the majority of it be handled by phone and correspondence. Each program was unique in some aspect (random or non-random, city or rural, English-speaking or bilingual, large or small); there were literally hundreds of variations of program needs. Therefore, there was no way to advise and supervise on-site staff as a group. Once again, many hours of Durham staff time were required to handle the supervision of the network. Coordination of their activities was handled daily. In most instances, immediate decisions were necessary and the field operations unit had to be prepared in advance for all problems.

Summary

As this report illustrates, each step in the process toward data collection required many steps of planning and preparation. By the fifteenth month the groundwork for the longitudinal study had been laid. Cooperation had been secured from 28 Head Start programs and 33 BES programs. NTS staff had collected data in 46 programs, including child tests, program interviews, and classroom observation data. A network of data collectors is in place for future data collection and NTS staff in Durham are prepared to supervise these staff and the additional staff who will be hired in the BES communities. Random assignment

was implemented in seven programs for Fall of 1979. With one exception (where insufficient children are available), random assignment should be possible in the remaining programs for future cohorts. Rapport with all BES programs has been excellent, enabling NTS staff to collect all data as scheduled.